

Air Force Prime Time, a weekly news magazine for and about airmen stationed overseas, airs Thursday evenings at 8:25 p.m. Central European Time on AFN television. In this week's edition, the Air Force's new logo, the latest on the Air Force advertising campaign, recruiting and retention efforts and more.



News briefs

New telephone procedures

Base military telephone systems now offer new features with the installation of a new telephone switch that took place Dec. 15.

People dialing from military phones may not hear a dial tone after dialing "99." After dialing the two digit connection code, continue dialing the commercial phone number. Pressing the "#" sign after dialing a phone number makes the connection quicker.

Also, all emergency phone numbers from military phones remain the same.

Call the 52nd Communications Squadron telephone trouble hot line at 119 or commercial at 06565-615717 for details.

Family days

The 52nd Fighter Wing family days are Tuesday and Dec. 29. U.S. federal and German holidays include Monday and Jan. 1. Jan. 12 is a wing family day.

Holiday party

A party for people assigned to Spangdahlem Air Base who may otherwise spend Christmas Eve alone takes place 5-9 p.m. Dec. 24 in the Saber Club. Call unit first sergeants for free tickets.

CDC closure

Spangdahlem and Bitburg child development centers and school age programs close Tuesday. Parents needing child care due to mission requirements should call 453-6022 to make reservations with the family child care office.

Airman's appreciation meal

Commanders serve dinner from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday at the Mosel Dining Hall. Menu selections include shrimp cocktail, French onion soup, ham, potatoes, vegetables, pies and cakes. Call 452-6727 for details.

See Briefs, Page 2

Eifel Times

Vol. 34, Issue 48

Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany

Dec. 22, 2000



Senior Airman Esperanza Berrios

Free ride

Front to back, Senior Airmen Michelle Almarode and Amanda Gonzales, Airmen Against Drunk Driving vice president and president respectively, mark common pick-up points on a local map. AADD volunteers provide transportation home for wing members who planned to drive themselves home from a party, but may have drank too much. Volunteers also drop off callers vehicles at their home. Calls are kept confidential. For assistance, dial 452-AADD (2233) or 452-HELP (4357).

Wing CE troop nails Sijan award

By 1st Lt. Angela Johnson
52nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Capt. Michael Geer found out about an early Christmas present Dec. 13 when the announcement was made he earned the 2000 Lance P. Sijan Air Force Leadership Award.

"I was surprised when I was nominated by the squadron, let alone winning at Air Force," said the 52nd Civil Engineer Squadron winner in the junior officer category. "There's (just) such tremendous people doing great

things at this base and in this command."

The captain's supervisor, though, wasn't surprised by his selection.

"We've had a huge construction and design program during the past couple of years. Without Captain Mike Geer's superb managing skills, we would not be able to support additional initiatives such as the Rhein-Main Transition Program and the Military Family Housing Renovation Project," said Udo Stuermer, engineering flight commander. "The RMT program alone is a 333 million

deutsche mark program consisting of 23 projects which have to be designed by September 2001 and constructed by June 2005. The MFH initiative is calling for an improvement of all unrenovated housing units by 2010. Here we're talking about another investment in the amount of \$160 million."

Geer is currently the design and construction chief for CE.

"This means that just about anything

See Sijan, Page 2

Fifteen wing captains to exchange bars for oak leaves

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas — The Calendar Year 00B Major Central Selection Board selected 1,815 captains, 15 from Spangdahlem Air Base and its geographically-separated units, for promotion to major.

A list of those selected was released Wednesday. Those selected locally are:

■James Abatti and Philippe Malebranche, 23rd Fighter Squadron

■Brian Fox and Paul Stang, 52nd Munitions Support Squadron

■Mark Lacy, 52nd Operations Support Squadron

■Timothy Lakata and Steven Ramer, 81st Fighter Squadron

■Marjorie Wimmer, 52nd Civil Engineer Squadron

■Kenneth Harp, 470th Air Base Squadron

■Gregory Endris, David Goosman, Michael Kosco, Troy Molendyke, Michael Mras and Michael Stewart, NATO Airborne Warning and Control Squadron

The selection board, which convened at the Air Force Personnel Center Sept. 18 to 29, considered 2,461 officers.

The entire list is posted on the Air Force

Personnel Center home page, [www.afpc-\(no hyphen\)randolph.af.mil](http://www.afpc-(no hyphen)randolph.af.mil).

The results of the 2000 board follows:

Selection statistics in-the-promotion zone for major:

■Line: 1,620 selected from 1,841 considered for an 88 percent select rate

■JAG: 45 selected from 54 considered for an 83.3 percent select rate

■Chaplain: 16 selected from 20 considered for an 80 percent select rate

■BSC: 87 selected from 102 considered for an 85.3 percent select rate

Selection statistics above-the-promotion zone for major:

■Line: 37 selected from 420 considered for an 8.8 percent select rate

■JAG: Four selected from eight considered for a 50 percent select rate

■Chaplain: One selected from four considered for a 25 percent select rate

■BSC: Five selected from 12 considered for a 41.7 percent select rate (Air Force Print News courtesy of Air Force Personnel Center News Service)



Senior Airman Esperanza Berrios

Right to left, Capt. Michael Geer, 52nd Civil Engineer Squadron design construction chief, and Staff Sgt. Sandra Butler, 52nd CES, review plans for a new water storage project on Spangdahlem Air Base.

Sijan

Continued from Page 1

built or repaired by someone other than an Air Force unit is done in my section," said Geer. "Our big efforts right now are the design for the Rhein-Main mission transfer, a water project and family housing renovations."

There are 29 people working in Geer's section - ranging from engineers and project inspectors to surveyors and drafts people. The group is about evenly split between military and civilian.

Geer graduated with a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Massachusetts Institute of Technology and was commissioned through its Reserve Officer Training Corps program. Through an Air Force Educational Delay program, he went straight to graduate school for a master's degree in CE at Penn State, and then back to MIT for

doctorate studies. He entered active duty before finishing his doctorate, but still hopes to finish it.

Geer is married and has a 1-year-old daughter. "My family supports me much more than I deserve," he said.

The Sijan award, created to recognize people assigned to organizations at the wing level and below who demonstrate outstanding leadership abilities, was first presented in 1981. The award is named after Captain Sijan; an Air Force Academy graduate who was shot down Nov. 9, 1967, over North Vietnam. He avoided capture for six weeks by dragging himself backward through the jungle. Sijan had a broken leg, a skull fracture and a mangled right hand. Despite these injuries, he escaped shortly after being captured, only to be caught once again. He died in Vietnamese captivity and was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.

Accidents

By Tech. Sgt. Franklin McElhaney
52nd Security Forces Squadron
reports and analysis

A 1990 BMW was traveling on L-46 near the town of Hetzerath when the driver swerved to avoid an animal crossing the road. The American's car started spinning in circles until he ended upside down in a ditch.

Ironically, the only property damage consisted of a "caution deer" sign being knocked down.

An American was traveling on A-60

toward Bitburg when he failed to negotiate a curve and struck a guardrail, resulting in severe vehicle damage with the vehicle being towed from the scene. Further details are unavailable due to an ongoing investigation.

Of the 10 minor accidents totaling \$7,450 in damages, three resulted because of "speed too fast for conditions."

This past year "speed too fast for conditions" accounted for 45 percent of all accidents in the Eifel region involving U.S. drivers.

The 52nd Civil Engineer Squadron readiness flight and chemical warfare training section have moved to building 127. Beginning Jan. 9, chemical warfare refresher and initial training classes take place in building 127. Phone numbers remain the same.



Airman 1st Class Michelle Roquid

Final deliveries

Airman 1st Class Nyasha Clarke, 52nd Communications Squadron, helps a customer mail a holiday package. The Spangdahlem post office opens for package pick up from 7 a.m. Saturday through 7 p.m. Sunday. All inbound mail received by the base post office before Monday will be posted by 2 a.m. Sunday. The Bitburg post office opens from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday.

Briefs

Continued from Page 1

Transportation closures

The following 52nd Transportation Squadron services close for the holidays:

■ Vehicle operations compound closes at 4 p.m. Sunday through 4 a.m. Tuesday. Call 0171-3011531 for emergency assistance.

■ The privately-owned vehicle inspection station and transportation management office close Tuesday and Dec. 29.

■ Base shuttle service closes Monday.

Medical services

The 52nd Medical Group offers only emergency services from 12:30-4:30 p.m. Jan. 4 for mandatory training.

Trash pick up

Visit the "miscellaneous" link on <http://intranet/> for Bitburg/Pruem 2001 trash pick up dates.

Flightline kitchen opens

The base's new flightline kitchen, located in building 160, opens at noon Jan. 3. Menu selections include entrees, grilled items, a salad bar and pastries.

Holiday hours

Spangdahlem and Bitburg commissaries close Christmas

Day and New Year's Day. The Bitburg commissary also closes Dec. 26 and Jan. 2.

Commissary special operating hours through the winter holiday season are:

Bitburg

■ 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday and Dec. 31

Spangdahlem

■ 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday and Dec. 31

■ 9 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Tuesday and Jan. 2

Army Air Force Exchange Service facilities Sunday hours are:

Bitburg

■ Main store, shoppette, Burger King Express - 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

■ Furniture store, optical shop, Willi Geck, Dold Exquisit, Unique Gifts, GNC, photo processing - 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

■ Box Office Video, filling station - 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

■ Anthony's Pizza, car care center, barber/beauty shop, new car sales, service mart and H&R Block - closed

Spangdahlem

■ Main store, BXtra, Burger King, filling station - 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

■ Anthony's Pizza - 10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

■ Popeyes - 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

■ Military clothing sales, car care center, barber/beauty shop, alterations, new car sales, SIXT car rentals, service mart, flower shop, movie theater, Willi Geck - closed

All AAFES facilities close Christmas Day. The following facilities also close Tuesday:

Bitburg

■ Barber/beauty shop, hospital barber shop, car care center

Spangdahlem

■ Barber/beauty shop, Penny Lane Thrift Shop

■ The Penny Lane Thrift Shop also closes Thursday.

Bitburg (Dec. 31 operating hours)

■ Burger King Express - 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

■ Filling station - 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

■ Main store, shoppette, Box Office Video, optical shop, Unique Gifts, GNC, photo processing - 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

■ Furniture store, Willi Geck, Dold Exquisit - 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

■ Anthony's Pizza, car care center, barber/beauty shop, new car sales, service mart, H&R Block - closed

Spangdahlem (Dec. 31 operating hours)

■ BXtra, Burger King - 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

■ Filling station - 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

■ Main store - 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

■ Anthony's Pizza - 10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

■ Popeyes - 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

■ Military clothing sales, car care center, barber/beauty shop, alterations, new car sales, SIXT car rental, service mart, flower shop, Willi Geck - closed

Strong dollar decreases U.S. military COLA

Rates drop throughout year due largely to strength of dollar

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany — U.S. military members based in Germany have seen a decrease in COLA rates throughout the year, due in large part to the strength of the U.S. dollar against the German deutschmark, say U.S. Air Forces in Europe finance officials.

"COLA is a variable allowance designed to keep purchasing power comparable to what's found in the continental United States," said Tech. Sgt. Michael Windsor, command pay and entitlements analyst for the headquarters USAFE Directorate of Financial Management.

"We get slight increases in one month while the next month we may get a slight decrease as the COLA rate catches up with the exchange rates during the previous weeks," Windsor said.

During the past year, the purchasing power for the average military member increased 50 percent, based on items typically purchased on the local economy. Consequently, the current COLA rate is lower than the rate one year ago, he said.

In addition to exchange rate fluctuations, COLA rates are also affected by other factors like service members' spending patterns and local prices.

A new market-basket survey, a review of more than 120 goods and services and the corresponding costs on the local economy, was recently completed and submitted through U.S. Army Europe to the Per Diem, Travel and Transportation Allowance Committee. The committee will use this information to determine if adjustments to the rates are necessary.

Windsor said one common misconception about COLA rates is locations without on-site support facilities should receive a higher rate than those with facilities.

The reality is, COLA rates are based on a comparison with U.S. buying power, not with another overseas location, he said. "Even if local prices at the different locations are comparable, the living pattern surveys completed by military members assigned to each location may produce different results."

For example, members at a geographically-separated unit may decide to do their grocery shopping 50 miles away at the nearest commissary instead of using the local

supermarket. "In doing so, their spending patterns (documented in the living pattern survey) would mirror those of personnel assigned to the location with the commissary," he said.

"Consequently, both groups of military members might receive the same COLA rate," he added.

The cost of driving the extra distance would not be factored into the COLA rate, he said. "Rather, it reflects a choice by military members at the GSU not to use the local supermarket. Using the local supermarket instead of driving the extra distance to use a commissary could result in a higher COLA rate for people at the GSU if higher prices were being paid for like items on the local economy," he said.

"In any case, members can rest assured that, under the COLA system, they will be adequately compensated so they remain on the same purchasing power level as their counterparts in the United States," he said. "COLA rates are adjusted as often as every two weeks." (USAFE News Service)

USAFE, wing name Spangdahlem's best

Officials from U.S. Air Forces in Europe and the 52nd Fighter Wing announced recent individual award winners and achievements in leadership, professionalism and innovation.

52nd Fighter Wing Lt. Gen. Leo Marquez
award nominee

■Tech. Sgt. Kenneth Shires, 852nd Munitions Squadron, Buechel Air Base, Germany — Munitions/missile maintenance technician/supervisor category

USAFE Hennessy Trophy

■Buechel AB, Germany — Food service excellence, small site category

USAFE Weapons Safety Officer

■Capt. Anthony Kusek, 852nd MUNSS

22nd Expeditionary Fighter Squadron, AEF-9
quarterly awards

■Airman 1st Class Gregory Ciasnocha, airman category

■Staff Sgt. David Abell, 52nd Supply Squadron, non-commissioned officer category

■Senior Master Sgt. Wayne Weyhrauch, senior NCO category

IDEA awards

■Tech. Sgt. Roy Cline, 52nd Equipment Maintenance Squadron, \$800

■Staff Sgt. Nick Kampf, 52nd Component Repair Squadron, \$400

■Senior Airman Howard Wallace, 52nd EMS, \$200

■Tech. Sgt. Michael Brooks, 52nd Operations Group, \$200

■Senior Airman Juliann Kuhn, 52nd Civil Engineer Squadron, \$200

■Airman 1st Class Larry Molina, 52nd EMS, \$200

Spangdahlem Middle School "Bulldog's Best"
5th grade

■Hope Leipert and Walter Schmidt

6th grade

■Jeanette Montes and Matthew Sherrier



Hertha visits Volkel

Above, Volkel Air Base, Netherlands, elementary school 6th graders, left to right, Sarah Naranjo, Emily Hinkson, Missy Effingham, Erin O'Neal and Kristin Scolarici perform the play, "The Coming of Hertha." The play tells a story of how the Dutch Santa Claus, called Hertha, delivers gifts to children. In this scene, Hertha, left, offers a child who has behaved well throughout the year a Christmas gift. The play was performed in German with English narration. Left, Vokel Elementary School 3rd and 4th graders welcome the Dutch Santa, Hertha, to their class. During the visit, students learned about Dutch Christmas traditions and sang Christmas carols.

Photos by Emily Gnadt

School board members get books, learn basics

Two-year experiment designed to offer parents another avenue for voicing education concerns

By Senior Airman
Jennifer Lindsey
52nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Eleven members of Spangdahlem Air Base's newly appointed two-year test school board met for the first time at an initial meeting held on base Dec. 8.

Spangdahlem and Bitburg school principals, the district superintendent and the wing support group commander greeted members as they stated their aspirations for the board and offered their support for the challenges that lie ahead.

"We're all excited about the potential of the new school board," said Marjorie Lewallen, Bitburg High School principal. "The board will look at all the schools to provide equal consideration for each of the schools' needs."

On the board's agenda, in addition to reading and becoming familiar with board regulations and guidelines, is to choose a president, vice president and secretary. The board will also set meeting schedules and author local school board by-laws.

Five other U.S. Air Forces in Europe bases take part in the school board experiment, including Royal Air Force Alconbury, England; Aviano AB, Italy; Incirlik AB, Turkey; RAF Lakenheath, England; and Ramstein AB.

Boards are designed similar to those in use by schools in the United States, consisting of parents of children who currently attend or



Tech. Sgt. Terry DeShields
Base fire department
training chief



Lt. Col. Drew Fallis
52nd Dental Squadron
orthodontist



Ed Gavagan
Family life/readiness
program manager



Rebecca Hinton
Military spouse
and homemaker

**Photo unavailable:
Sandeda Long**
Bitburg High School
senior

have graduated from a DoDDS school, said Dr. Susan Kelly, USAFE's liaison with Department of Defense Education Activity-Europe. The goal is to provide a more productive means of resolving parent's concerns about children's education.

During the test period, the board will make recommendations to and advise Brig. Gen. Don Hoffman, 52nd Fighter Wing commander, regarding support military services provided to the local schools. This includes making recommendations on medical, administrative and logistical support services.

Board members may also advise the school superintendent on school environment quality and other such concerns addressed by local school advisory committees.



**Chief Master Sgt.
Michael Holas**
52nd Logistics Group



Capt. Bill Rogers
Judge advocate
chief of military justice



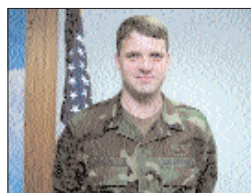
Lt. Col. Jim Rushford
52nd Medical Group
Surgical Flight commander



Master Sgt. Mike Shaffer
52nd MDG
first sergeant



Capt. Ray Sirak
52nd MDG Educational
Developmental Intervention



Master Sgt. Terry White
52nd Component Repair
Squadron Avionics Flight

Properly pack holiday trash, recyclables for pick up

By Tech. Sgt. Andy Harper
52nd Civil Engineer Squadron
Pollution Prevention Flight

Christmas is near and with it comes all the joys and laughter of families as they open their gifts on Christmas Day.

Unfortunately Christmas also brings large amounts of wrapping paper, boxes and other packaging material that must be disposed of.

The amount of material generated Christmas Day alone far exceeds the limited amount of trash and paper container space. Add to this the two-day German holiday and it easy to imagine the results. Every refuse container in military family and government-leased housing areas soon overflows with trash. To reduce the burden on the trash and paper containers, as well as contractors, the 52nd Civil Engineer Squadron Environmental Flight suggests people follow a few simple guidelines.

First, materials should be separated into the different types of waste: paper, yellow bag recyclables and trash. Doing so will ensure as much of the material as possible will get recycled and not taken to the landfill.

Second, reduce the size of the material. All boxes should be broken down and

Use the right bag – separate recycling and trash

Yellow bag

- Plastic shopping bags, containers
- Biscuit and potato chip tubes
- Cans
- Styrofoam
- Milk cartons
- CD containers

Paper only

- Paper gift wrap
- Cardboard boxes
- Magazines
- Newspapers
- Junk mail
- Paper plates
- Paper bags

Trash only

- Greasy items
- Ice cream boxes
- Microwave popcorn bags
- Pizza boxes
- Used coffee filters
- Animal waste
- Diapers

Christmas trees

- Remove all ornaments, tinsel.
- Place beside trash areas for pick up Wednesday through Jan. 12.
- Off base residents bring trees to base recycling centers.

wrapping paper tightly compressed and bagged to reduce the amount of space it takes up. Paper containers fill quickly with only a few unbroken-down boxes, leaving little room for all other paper.

Finally, all material must be bagged. Paper and cardboard can also be put into large cardboard boxes. This serves two purposes, it helps reduce the size of the material and it makes it easier for contractors to pick it up.

Each year, residents simply dump the material on the ground or in the container enclosures creating an eyesore and increasing cleanup time. Yellow bags must be used for all plastic, styrofoam and other packing

material except paper. Contractors won't pickup these recyclable items if placed in a regular trash bag.

Also, yellow bags shouldn't be used for other materials such as trash and paper. If there's no more room in the containers, neatly place bags in the trash enclosure or around the containers, but don't block access to the containers. When vehicles block the area, contractors can't pick up the material. This caused a problem at many locations during the four-day Thanksgiving weekend.

When the recycling containers get too full, residents are encouraged to use the base recycling centers located on Spangdahlem

and Bitburg. The recycling centers have containers designed to handle large amounts of material and are a great way to help keep the base clean and neat. Both recycling centers close Monday and Tuesday, but reopen Wednesday.

When it's time to forfeit the Christmas tree, clear it of all ornaments, tinsel and other decorations, and placed beside the trash area for pickup available from Wednesday through Jan. 12. Off-based residents can bring their trees to the recycling centers.

Pickup schedules for some housing areas will be rescheduled for German holidays. Trash pick up is Wednesday for Bitburg housing, Herford and Speicher GLH and, time permitting, at Spangdahlem housing. Trash pickup will continue Thursday for Spangdahlem housing if necessary. Paper will be picked up on Wednesday for all areas and continue on the next day, if necessary. Off-base residents should contact their landlord to find out if the pick up dates for the area have changed.

For more information on recycling and trash disposal during the holiday season, call the environmental flight at 452-5124.



Community Mailbox

Hanukkah celebrations

A base Hanukkah menorah lighting ceremony takes place at 5:30 p.m. today at the Spangdahlem chapel. A reception will follow. Call Master Sgt. Dave Berry at 452-6767 for more information.

Actors wanted

ACT-Eifel auditions for the March presentation of, "Don't Dress for Dinner," take place at 1 p.m. Jan. 6 in the Spangdahlem community activities center. Parts are available for three men and three women ages 18 or older. Call Master Sgt. Robert Benton at 452-5444 or Robert Onsgard at 452-6058 for details.

Bitburg schools activities

■The high school advisory committee meets at 3:30 p.m. Jan. 8 in the information center.

■The middle school Parent, Teacher, Student Association meets at 7 p.m. Jan. 9 in Room 302.

■The middle school advisory committee meets at 3:15 p.m. Jan. 11 in the information center.

All parents are invited to attend the meetings. Call the high school at 453-7937 or middle school at 453-7110 for details.

Parent support

"Mentoring Moms and Parenting Partners" is a support program that teams experienced parents with new parents who would like someone to go to for advice. Call Dr. Suzanne Furman at 452-8279 or Becky Johnson at 452-6881 for more information.

Support group

Base family advocacy is considering starting support groups for people sharing similar chronic health problems, difficulties



Courtesy photo

Handmade with care

Ann Sherwood, Spangdahlem Elementary School art teacher, helps third grade students Audrey Peterson, left, and Christina Paz create Christmas cards for hospital staff stationed at camps Bondsteel and Able Sentry in Kosovo. Spangdahlem students mailed more than 180 cards with letters written by the students to those in the field.

adjusting to living overseas, or for those with children who have emotional or developmental challenges. The goal is to help people through challenging times in life by sharing experiences and mutual

understanding. Call 453-3128 or 452-8279 for more information or to register.

Fitness party

The Fitness First Kick-off party takes

place at 5 p.m. Jan. 3 in the Spangdahlem fitness center. Personal fitness trainers will offer free fitness assessments programs. Call 452-6634 for details.

Honor guard

Recruiting continues for people willing to serve with this elite organization. Call Tech. Sgt. Malik Sultan or Staff Sgt. Jeanna Morgan at 452-6783 for more information.

Education office

■No tests or examinations take place Monday through Jan. 1. Testing resumes Jan. 2. Call for times and dates of specific examinations.

■City Colleges of Chicago's new operating hours are 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday. The office closes for federal holidays.

■A commissioning briefing takes place at 2:30 p.m. Jan. 4. Call the education office to make an appointment.

■The education office offers free walk-in counseling each Monday through Thursday from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and each Friday from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Call the education office at 452-6063 for more information.

New Year's Eve celebrations

■Spangdahlem Middle School hosts a dance for 5th- through 8th-grade students 6-9 p.m. in the school cafeteria. Cost is \$2.50.

■Parties take place at the Saber Club on Spangdahlem Air Base and Club 2012 at Bitburg from 8 p.m. to 4 a.m. Cost for each party is \$12 for members in advance or \$17 at the door. Non-members pay \$17 in advance and \$22 at the door. Admission includes appetizers, entertainment, party favors, champagne and breakfast.

Postal rate increase

Postal rates for all classes of mail increase Jan. 7 to 34 cents. Base postal services offers the new stamp marked, "U.S.A. First Class."

Shipping rates for packages will also slightly increase.

January

4 Thirty-one members of the 52nd Fighter Wing were awarded some of the Air Force's highest honors for heroism, aerial achievement and meritorious service. The list included two Silver Star recipients and numerous Distinguished Flying Cross and Bronze Star awards for actions during Operation Allied Force.

25 Gen. Greg Martin, U.S. Air Forces in Europe commander, chose Spangdahlem Air Base as the first stop on his tour of command bases after assuming the position Jan. 13.

27 Capt. John Cherrey, 81st Fighter Squadron assistant operations officer, was selected by the White House as the sole military guest of the president and first lady at the State of the Union address. He was selected from among a field of Defense Department nominees representing each of the services.

February

9 Maj. Gen. Joseph Wehrle, 3rd Air Force commander, flew to Spangdahlem AB from his home station at Royal Air Force Mildenhall, England, to personally recognize and congratulate the 52nd Fighter Wing for its U.S. Air Forces in Europe Inspector General functional inspection rating. It was the best of the four bases looked at up to that point in the command. "Wasn't that something?" Wehrle asked the maximum capacity crowd during the outbrief.

19 The Bitburg Barons High School basketball team overcame a 14-point first quarter deficit to defeat the Hanau Panthers 66-59 to capture the Division II crown.

March

1 More than 1,300 people were in attendance to watch Brig. Gen. Don Hoffman become the 20th commander of the 52nd Fighter Wing.

25 The First Term Airmen's Center graduated its first class of 25 students. During the four-week course, first-term airmen spend time in-processing, doing details around base and academics. It's intended to better train and equip airman to be successful in today's Air Force, said Master Sgt. Tilmon Hodges, former FTAC instructor.

April

1 Twelve F-16s and more than 200 people from Spangdahlem AB arrived in Slovakia to train with their counterparts in the Slovak air force. It was the first time U.S. warplanes had been allowed to train over what was once part of communist Czechoslovakia. In addition, DRK (German Red Cross) assumes responsibility for ambulance service for Bitburg military housing residents "to ensure optimal deployment of 52nd Medical Group resources," said Lt. Col. (Dr.) James Reitman, medical services flight commander.

May

10 The final inspection took place on the more than \$22 million taxi-track pavement and lighting project, after nearly three years of construction. The work had to be done in six phases and around various short-notice military requirements.

27 The Bitburg Lady Barons High School fast pitch softball team emerged from post-season play as the Division II champions.

June

5 Chief Master Sgt. Audrey Thompson became the 52nd Fighter Wing command chief master sergeant.

7 For the second consecutive year, Air Force officials selected a 52nd Fighter Wing member as one of the 12 Outstanding Airmen of the Year. Tech. Sgt. Matthew Marshall was sitting at his dinner table when a cadre of base leaders knocked on his door to tell him the news.

July

9 Nearly 50 people from the 52nd Medical Group took part in exercise Medical Central and Eastern Europe 00-2



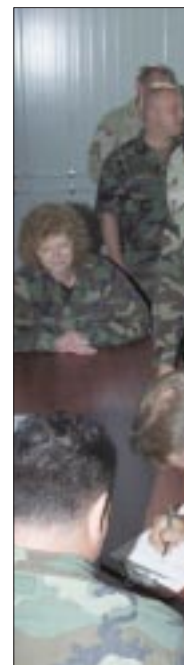
Tech. Sgt. Matthew Marshall, 52nd Supply Squadron, test fits a pressure relief line on a 5,000-gallon liquid nitrogen tank. Marshall was one of the 12 Outstanding Airmen of the Year, the second selected from Spangdahlem in the past two years.



Capt. John Cherrey, 81st Fighter Squadron assistant operations officer, at a formal event in January.



Staff Sgt. Oscar Butler Jr., 52nd Medical Group, consoles a Romanian infant who received vaccinations and a well-baby check during a humanitarian civic assistance visit to the Babadag village orphanage. Butler and 47 other members of the medical group deployed for two weeks to Romania to take part in Medical Center and Eastern Europe 00-2. The unit was the first in Europe to field test the new Expeditionary Medical Support System, which replaced the Air Transportable Hospital.



Members of the 606th Air Expeditionary Medical Support Squadron prepare for flight meals. A deployment for Air Expeditionary Medical Support Squadron was to Vietnam. More than 600 personnel from the 22nd Air Force left Spangdahlem AB



assigned to the 81st Fighter Squadron at the time, shakes hands with Hank Aaron at the State of the Union as First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton and guests look on. Cherrey was the sole military guest of the st lady at the address Jan. 27.



Staff Sgt. Laura Sparks

th Air Control Squadron sign-
Aug. 25 before processing to
litionary Force 9, the first AEF
e 52nd Fighter Wing. The
arious locations in Southwest
0 wing members, including
and 81st Fighter Squadrons,
between Aug. 27 and Sept. 3.



Senior Airman Esperanza Berrios

Slovak President Rudolf Schuster, center, watches a demonstration of the MK-6 Andros robot operated by Tech. Sgt. Scott Sawyer, 52nd Civil Engineer Squadron, during the president's tour of U.S. operations in Slovakia in April. The deployment by base members and aircraft from the 23rd Fighter Squadron to Malacky Air Force Base marked the first time U.S. warplanes operated in the country.



Airman 1st Class Kimberlie Drews

Members of the 52nd Component Repair Squadron react to the good news in February as the results of the Inspector General functional inspection were announced. The 52nd Fighter Wing received the best marks from among four command bases inspected.

in Romania. Exercise medical forces conducted mock disaster relief operations, humanitarian assistance and real-world medical care for the simultaneous Marine Forces Europe-led exercise Rescue Eagle 2000. It was the first time the new Expeditionary Medical Support system, which replaced the Air Transportable Hospital, was field tested.

11 About 200 Spangdahlem AB airmen arrived in Malacky, Slovakia, supporting the first deployment of A/OA-10 aircraft to the nation.

August

2 Chaplain (Maj.) Karl Weirsum, 52nd Fighter Wing, was awarded the Bronze Star, making him the only chaplain who took part in Operation Allied Force to receive the medal.

5 A dozen F-16s and about 170 Spangdahlem AB airmen arrived in Las Vegas to test combat readiness in the final Green Flag exercise.

27 Members of the 81st and 22nd fighter squadrons, and the 606th Air Control Squadron started deploying for Air Expeditionary Force 9, the first AEF deployment for the 52nd Fighter Wing.

September

5 Air Force planes and 125 airmen, including two F-16CJs and support crew from Spangdahlem AB, traveled to Air Force Base Waterkloof, South Africa, to take part in the South African Air Force anniversary air show. Air Force participation in the air show marked the second time during the year American forces visited South Africa. U.S. troops were deployed there in March for Operation Atlas Response, when the international community banded together to provide humanitarian assistance for victims of flooding in neighboring Mozambique.

25 More than 600 wing members deploy for Phiblex 2000 in Croatia. The exercise, which took place Sept. 25-29, was designed to promote regional stability, improve common understanding of doctrine and training and practice interoperability between U.S. and Croatian forces.

October

13 Members of the Ukraine Treaty Verification Agency visited the base as part of the Vienna Document. The agreement allows signatory-country representatives to tour other signatory-country bases. The evaluations increase confidence among European countries and the United States that none are massing unreported weapons.

November

9 About 100 people take part in a retreat ceremony, which included a 21-gun salute, in memory of John L. Levitow. He died Nov. 8 after a long battle with cancer.

11 The Bitburg Barons High School football team mercy-ruled the SHAPE Spartans 41-0 at home to repeat as the Division II football champs. Eight players were named to the all-conference first team.

10 Aircraft 91-0337 lands at 3 p.m. at Prince Sultan Air Base, marking the 22nd Fighter Wing's 300th F-16CJ sortie in one month. The feat required each of the squadron's eight aircraft to be flown about 39 times in one month – more than twice the squadron's normal sortie rate. In addition to trying to achieve their goal, members also completed inspections, upgraded pilots, and provided training.

December

1 The first large group of returnees from AEF-9 land at Spangdahlem. Family and friends greet four waves of returnees throughout the week at Hangar 3.

10 Wing chapel services offers the 39th presentation of Handel's "Messiah" in the Bitburg chapel. In addition to a more than 80-person all-volunteer choir, the performance featured the donated talent of four professional operatic soloists. For the conductor, Dr. Michael Rhodes, the concert was his 39th performance.

In Germany, Christmas time means family time

Past traditions mix with new as people share spirit of giving through holidays

By Iris Reiff
Public Affairs

Germans celebrate Christmas much the same way as Americans — decorate Christmas trees, hang lights and shop for gifts. But in some ways, Germans and Americans observe the holiday differently.

For example, Christmas Eve holds special meaning for Germans. They usually spend a quiet evening with their families and sometimes wait until Dec. 24 to decorate and display Christmas trees. Many Germans also display the family nativity, which is set up at the same time. Gifts are placed under the tree after decorating is done.

Family celebration

Germans cook their Christmas Eve meal in the afternoon. It has become a tradition to offer a cold buffet-style meals with salads on Christmas Eve and large, fancy meal throughout the Christmas holidays. Before or after a festive evening meal, gifts are opened and for many, especially the children, this is a highlight of the celebration. Many Germans may also attend church services in the late afternoon, evening or attend a midnight Mass.

The remainder of Christmas Eve is often spent with family, sitting together singing Christmas carols in front of the decorated tree, lighting candles, enjoying home-baked cookies and each other's company.

In Germany the spirit of family sharing continues on the first Christmas Day, Dec. 25, and the second Christmas Day, Dec. 26, both legal holidays.

Saint Stephanus Day is celebrated Dec. 26. The holiday honors the saint who was stoned to death for standing up for his Christian beliefs. The day is also celebrated by Germans in remembrance of the children who were killed in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago. According to the Bible, King Herod ordered the slaying of all male Israelite infants younger than 2 years old, hoping to kill Jesus Christ.

Christmas traditions

Many of the older Christmas customs practiced in particular regions of Germany are no longer practiced.

In many regions, it was customary for people to hold costume parades or go out caroling and gathering gifts. On Christmas Eve, churches offered "Krippenspiele" or Christmas plays.

Also, instead of Christmas trees, or in addition to them, Germans displayed Christmas pyramids made of wood. Today the pyramids, set into whirling motion by the rising heat of lighted candles, are regaining popularity.

The connection between the Christmas tree and the pre-Christian use of green branches and lights for the religious cult of winter has often been maintained, but never proven. This custom arose in the Middle Ages and the connection of the evergreen fir tree with candles can be traced back to early 17th century. Public Christmas trees were first set up in New York in 1912. Since 1919 this tradition has spread throughout Germany.

One tradition, which continues today, is the display of Christmas nativity scenes with artistically carved wooden figures in homes and in churches.

German Christmas pastry also has a long history. "Lebkuchen" and the baking of other sweet cookies is still a strong family tradition in Germany. "Christstollen" with raisins, nuts, candied lemon and orange peels is often served with roast goose or turkey.

Christmas celebrations in Germany may be quieter and more reserved than elsewhere, but Germans, like other people throughout the world, share the same spirit of happiness, joy and love. And like Americans, wishing people, "Frohe Weihnachten und viel Glueck im Neuen Jahr!" - a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year - is also a popular tradition.



Iris Reiff

A German girl admires a gingerbread house at a local Christmas market. Baking, particularly gingerbread, is part of Christmas traditions in Germany.



■For last-minute Christmas shoppers, the larger German stores remain open until 6 p.m. Saturday. A free Park & Ride service takes place in Trier from 8:45 a.m. to 6:15 p.m. Follow signs off the Autobahn that read Park & Ride.

■Local Christmas markets take place now through Saturday in Wittlich, Manderscheid and through tonight in Trier.

■Don't miss the 2000 "Christmas Moments" concert at the Bitburg Edith-Stein School at 8 p.m. Saturday. This is an excellent performance according to some people who attended the show. Tickets are 48 DM and can be obtained by calling 06561-6001-144 or 145. A limited number of tickets will be available at the door prior to the event. For those who cannot attend the Bitburg concert, a performance also takes place at 8 p.m. tonight at the Trier Europa hall. Tickets for the Trier show are limited and can possibly be obtained by calling 0651-145990.

■A jazz concert by Euro Core takes place at 8:30 p.m. today at the Trier Tuchfabrik cultural center, located on Weberbach, Wechselstrasse.

■Listen to Soul music by Larry Garner at 8 p.m. Saturday at the Freudenburg Ducaal. For more information or to get tickets, call 0651-145990.

■The "Eldorado Christmas Party" takes place at 8 p.m. Saturday in Luxembourg. For more information and tickets, call 0651-145990.

■Enjoy seeing a series of paintings by the artist Horst Antjes now through February at the Wittlich Georg Meistermann museum. The art display is open from 10 a.m. to noon and 2-5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and from 2-5 p.m. Saturday, Sunday and holidays. The museum is located inside the Rathaus, or city hall, in the main pedestrian area.

■Reserve your ticket now to the "Fire of the Dance" show at 8 p.m. Jan. 13 at Trier's Europa hall. For

tickets, call 0651-14599.

■A Christmas concert by the Euren "Young Tenors" will be performed at 4:30 p.m. Jan. 7 at the Trier-Euren St. Helena church.

■The Trier Jazz Musicians will perform Christmas music Tuesday, which is Boxing Day, a federal holiday in Germany. Location is the Trier Tufa "Textorium" pub, located on Weberbach/Wechselstrasse.

■"Music with Candle Light" is the title for a classical concert at 8 p.m. Monday at the Wittlich synagogue.

■Jazz music plays at 8:30 p.m. Monday at the Wittlich Kaiburg festive hall.

■A major New Year's party for young people takes place at 8 p.m. Dec. 31 at the Trier Europe hall. Abba Kadabra, Snail's House and Gimme 5 will perform. Tickets are DM 35 at the door.

■Enjoy a public Christmas party Saturday at the Kroev Weinbrunnen hall.

■Another New Year's party takes place at Trier's Tuchfabrik cultural center Dec. 31. The DunDumba and California bands will perform music.

■Attend a flea market Dec. 31 inside and outside the Trier-Feyen Flohmarkt hall.

■Attend a flea market Jan. 7 inside and outside the Kroev Halle; on Trier West Hornstrasse, near the Aldi grocery store; inside and outside the Hillesheim market hall; inside the Koblenz Alte Viehmarkt hall and at the Zell Stadthalle or city hall.

■Fun, a youngsters theater play, will be performed at 8 p.m. Jan. 4 at the Trier City Theater. For tickets, call 0651-145990.

■Listen to jazz music at 7:30 p.m. Jan. 4 at the Bernkastel-Kues Moselland hall. The concert will be performed by the Barrelhouse Jazzband. For tickets, call 0651-145990.

■A Gala ballet takes place at 7:30 p.m. Jan. 6 at the Trier City Theater.

■Folk music by Angelo Branduardi will occur Jan. 8 at the Cologne Philharmonie. For tickets, call 0651-145990.

■Visit a flea market Jan. 14, in front of the Schweich Edeka Neukauf store; inside the Trier Messepark hall, located at the Moselauen fairgrounds; inside and outside the Machern cloister, located near the Mosel town of Zeltingen; inside and outside the Bernkastel-Kues Gueter hall or old train station; at the Idar Oberstein fairgrounds. A small antique market also takes place at the Bitburg Hotel Eifelbrau festival hall.

■Participate in the 16th Lake Stausee Dreikoenigslauf or Three Kings run, Jan. 7, in Biersdorf, located outside of Bitburg. Besides a 12-kilometer run, there will be several shorter and longer runs for all ages as well as a 4-k walking tour. Events start at 9:30 a.m. with the 12-kilometer run. At 11:30 a.m., observers are invited to the awards ceremony where nice prizes await all winners. For more information about this

event, visit the German internet site at www.lauftreff.de->Kalender.

■An art exhibit featuring, fire, form, enamel, bronze and more takes place now through Jan. 7 at the "Alte Muehle" of the Himmerod Abbey. Displays open from 2-5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday.

■Enjoy Maxl's original Bavarian music New Year's concert at 7:30 p.m. Jan. 5 at the Bernkastel-Kues Moselland hall, located on Kueser Plateau. Tickets are 35, 40 and 45 DM per person.

■Listen to a New Year's concert at 8 p.m. Jan. 6 in Bitburg Hall, building 300. On schedule are compositions by Mozart, Tchaikowsky, Johann Strauss and Jacques Offenbach. For tickets, contact the Bitburg Cultural Society now at 06561-6001-144 or 145. A free shuttle service will run from downtown Bitburg to the base and return.

■Visit a flea market Jan. 21, inside the Dreis Dreys

hall; along the Zeltingen Mosel shore; at the Bitburg Hela parking place; inside and outside the Pruem market hall; inside and outside the Koblenz Messe hall, located on Wallersheim Kreisel and in front of the Kaiserslautern Real (Multi Center.) 14; and at the St. Brikcius church of Bernkastel-Kues. Tickets are 20 DM.

■German holidays in the Rheinland-Pfalz region are: New Years Day, Jan. 1; Good Friday, April 13; Easter, April 15; Easter Monday, April 16; Labor Day, May 1; Ascension Day, May 24; Pentecost, June 3; Whitmonday, June 4; Corpus Christi Day, June 14; German Reunion Day, Oct. 3; All Saint's Day, Nov. 1; Christmas Day, Dec. 25; Boxing Day, Dec. 26. Fasching takes place Feb. 22-27 this year.

■School breaks in the Rheinland-Pfalz region are April 5-20; June 28 through Aug. 10; Oct. 1-12; and Dec. 21 through Jan. 4.



Out and about

Movies

All movies play at 7 p.m. unless otherwise indicated.

Bitburg Castle
Tonight

Men of Honor (R)

Chronicle of the inspirational, true-life exploits of Carl Brashear, who becomes the Navy's first African-American master diver. Brashear runs into formidable opposition in Billy Sunday, a rebellious senior officer and master diver who ultimately helps him overcome a crippling injury, and fight racism and bureaucracy, to make military history.

Saturday

I'll Be Home for Christmas
(PG, 9 a.m.)

Jack Frost (PG, 10:45 a.m.)

Jingle All the Way

(PG, 12:45 p.m.)

Miracle on 34th Street

(PG, 2:30 p.m.)

Men of Honor

Sunday

Little Nicky (PG-13)

Adam Sandler is Little Nicky, a shy and awkward guy with two bullies for older brothers. Little Nicky is the son of the devil and lives in hell. When dad decides not to make his brothers the heir to his evil throne, they go to New York, hell-bent on creating their own hell on earth. A nervous Nicky must find his brothers and restore the balance between good and evil.

Closed Monday and Tuesday

Wednesday

Little Nicky

Thursday

Nurse Betty (R)

Betty is traumatized as she bears witness to her husband's shady business deal. Betty promptly leaves Kansas as she's followed by Sheriff Ballard and a local reporter, who are investigating her husband's murder and Betty's sudden unexplained disappearance.

Spangdahlem Skyline

Tonight

The Grinch (PG, 7 and 9 p.m.)

Saturday

The Grinch (noon, 2 and 7 p.m.)

Sunday

The Grinch (noon)

Closed Monday

Tuesday

Rugrats in Paris (G)

Tommy and the whole gang tag along with Stu to Reptarland. But the Rugrats big adventure turns out to be more than glamour. As their travels take them from the Eiffel Tower to Notre Dame and everywhere in between, they learn new lessons about courage, loyalty, trust and above all, true love.

Closed Wednesday and Thursday

Times and movies are subject to change.
For the most current information,
call 453-7541.

Three Magi singers visit Eifel residents

Heilige Drei Koenige celebrations mark end of German Christmas holidays

By Iris Reiff
52nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Annually, quite a few Americans wonder why three people, most often children, travel door-to-door in German towns and villages Jan. 6.

The tradition is the Feast of the Three Magi or "Heilige Drei Koenige." The event commemorates the journey of the three wise men who offered gifts to the infant Jesus in Bethlehem.

In the 9th century, the legend of the Three Magi became the legend of the oriental kings, named Gaspar, Melchior and Balthasar. In 1164, relics alleged to be derived from the Magi, which were kept in Milan for centuries, were brought to the Shrine of the Three Kings in the Koln cathedral. To this day, Dreikoenigsschrein remains the greatest treasure of this famous church. In fact, the relics, sought out by innumerable pilgrims during the Middle

Ages, motivated the citizens of Koln to build the great cathedral.

The custom of celebrating Three Kings Day spread from Koln to other German Roman-Catholic areas. For the church, Jan. 6 is the feast of Epiphany, celebrating the manifestation of the Savior to mankind. For the Catholic population; however, it's primarily the feast of the Three Kings.

In some rural areas today, a number of superstitious customs were practiced on the eve of Jan. 6 to protect the house from evil spirits. Branches consecrated by the church were burned in houses and stables and the initials of the Three Kings, C+M+B, and the year were written on the door beam with consecrated chalk. The practice of writing on the door beam continues today.

Groups, often church mass servants, walk from house to house dressed as the Three Holy Kings. They carry a star-shaped lantern on a stick. Because the

group carries a star and sings songs or recite a religious poem at people's doors, they are also called the star singers. In return for their gift of song or poetry, the star singers get gifts such as eggs, bread, cake or money donations, which goes toward humanitarian aid.

The Feast of the Three Magi also signifies the end of the Christmas season in Germany.

On this day, people begin taking down their trees and other Christmas decorations.



Photos by Iris Reiff

Local German children dressed as the Three Magi, or "Star Singers", visit a home, offering the gifts of song and poetry.



The initials of the Three Kings and the year are marked on a door for good fortune throughout the new year.

Sankt Nikolaus visits children before Christmas

By Iris Reiff
52nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs

A German Christmas tradition is Sankt Nikolaus Day, when children receive small gifts in their shoes, which they leave outside the door overnight.

But, the German Sankt Nikolaus shouldn't be confused with the American Santa Claus. He's different. German Sankt Nikolaus visits the children long before Christmas, on Dec. 6.

Sankt Nikolaus features the Bishop Nicholas of Myra, who lived in the 4th century and who, according to a legend, gave endowments to the three daughters of an impoverished nobleman.

According to another version of the legend, he saved three scholastics from the clutches of a cannibal. Despite whichever story people chose as the truth, he was a good man. During the Middle Ages, the day which commemorated him was an occasion for



Knecht Ruprecht and Sankt Nikolaus visit an American family living in the Binsfeld military housing area Dec. 6.

charitable giving. It was a day for rewarding students and allowing children to collect gifts.

In Germany, it's traditional for Sankt Nikolaus to visit children Dec. 5, the night before Sankt Nikolaus Day. The saint presents gifts and discusses the good and bad things the children did

throughout the year. He also asks them to recite a poem or sing a Christmas song.

The gifts are provided beforehand by the parents, along with a list, telling Sankt Nikolaus about things the parents want him to mention. Usually, Knecht Ruprecht, dressed in black clothes

and rattling a chain, accompanies Sankt Nikolaus. He carries a bag with an artificial leg or arm sticking out to convince children he has already taken a bad child with him.

Sometimes Knecht Ruprecht waits outside when the children become too afraid. However, Knecht Ruprecht may also help Sankt Nikolaus present goodies to the children.

In some towns, Sankt Nikolaus arrives either by sled (if it snows) or by coach.

Children who aren't visited will set their shoes on their doorstep or windowsill, hoping Sankt Nikolaus will leave something for them for the next morning.

In Germany, it's the Christ Child rather than Santa Claus that brings the presents and sets them under the tree before Christmas Eve.

Eifel sports world

Youth wrestling

The Bitburg Junior Barons youth wrestling team seeks players ages 5-14 and coaches. Call Chief Master Sgt. Ken McQuiston at 06561-944575.

Women's basketball

Women interested in joining a base basketball team should call Master Sgt. Tilmon Hodges Jr. at 452-6123 to register or for more information.

Outdoor recreation

Winter hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. Call 452-7176 for details.

Football Frenzy

Enjoy the games at Club 2012 from 6 p.m. to 1 a.m. Sunday. Call 453-2012 for details.

Eifel Lanes bowling

Center hours are 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Friday-Saturday and noon to 9 p.m. Sunday. Call 452-6217 for details.

Eifel Mountain Golf

■The base's new driving range is open 24 hours daily. Cost is \$2 for one bucket of balls or \$20 for a ticket good for 10 buckets.

■Golf course and pro-shop hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekends and 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays. Snack bar hours are 8 a.m. to noon weekends and 7 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. weekdays. Call 452-6821 for details.

Fitness center news

People using fitness center facilities must hand-carry athletic shoes they plan to wear while working out to protect court floors and equipment.



Julie Speegle



Working out

Above, Skelton Memorial Fitness Center Polar Bear 5-kilometer run participants "brrrave" the morning cold to have their shot at the annual first place title Dec. 15. Senior Airman Daniel Armando, 52nd Security Forces Squadron, took first place in the men's division with a 19:10 time. Sonja LeRoy, Air Force Radio and Television Service Detachment One, March Air Reserve Base, Calif., claimed first place in the women's division. LeRoy was vacationing in Germany when she heard of the event and decided to participate. Left, 11-year-old Alyssa Bolstad takes part in gymnastics at the Spangdahlem youth center. With fitness a required part of life in the military, the 52nd Services Squadron offers numerous ways to get fit for military members, civilians and their families.

Sports commentary

Take time to maintain fit, healthy lifestyle

By Maj. Paul Kimble
30th Transportation Squadron

VANDENBERG AIR FORCE BASE, Calif. — A few weeks ago at a squadron physical training session, I observed an NCO running at a furious pace. I caught up to her and asked, "What got into you today?" She replied, "I want to get this over with; I have a lot of work to do!"

Her approach to physical fitness typifies that of many in today's Air Force. Too often we view time devoted to physical fitness as extracurricular. Therefore, we do not include time for physical fitness in our schedule, or it becomes the first activity cancelled when work gets in the way. Organized physical training at the unit level should be an integral part of our work day, weighted equally to some tasks we rate as critical, and higher than some events the value of which is questionable.

Our Air Force doctrine supports this assertion: "Air Force fitness programs

encourage warriors to maintain a fit and healthy lifestyle so airmen are battle ready." Each one of us is an expeditionary airman who must be prepared to deploy anywhere in the world on short notice. Every deployment tests our physical abilities far beyond our day-to-day existence at home station. We may be asked to unload cargo, construct tents and build defensive fighting positions long before we get to eat a hot meal or sleep.

Physical fitness programs serve as a force multiplier. Staff Sgt. Mario Kuhn of the 76th Helicopter Flight praised the virtues of the unit-level organized physical training he experienced while assigned to a NATO transportation unit.

"Those morning PT sessions really brought everyone together," he said. "They created camaraderie among all the Army, Navy and Air Force people."

Beyond this, Kuhn believed working out

made him more productive.

"PT made me feel more alert throughout the day," Kuhn said. "I could tell the difference when I didn't work out."

PT bolstered unit morale, he said, which in turn made a tough mission in Bosnia easier.

Some folks reason they can get by without regular exercise and get in shape just before their fitness test. Focusing on the fitness test can be shortsighted; a deployment to Saudi Arabia may present a more difficult measure of fitness.

A study published in the May 1999 issue of Aviation Space and Environmental Medicine looked at the effects of heat stress and chemical protective clothing on military members. The study concluded, "In preparation for exercise in an uncompensable heat stress environment, short-term aerobic training offers little, if any, benefit and is not an adequate substitute

for a high level of aerobic fitness resulting from habitual exercise and training."

Others think organized physical training has no place in the Air Force. I've overheard people say adding push-ups and crunches to the annual fitness test already make us too much like the Army. Kuhn disagrees.

"At first I didn't understand the need for all the PT, but it was well worth it," Kuhn said. "We were prepared for the physical challenges we faced in Sarajevo. We all felt better and we didn't get sick as much."

So, when you're planning your week on Monday, pencil in some time for exercise. Better yet, organize a unit-level PT program to keep your warriors ready for battle. You'll not only be implementing Air Force doctrine, you'll be following the advice of Gen. Hap Arnold, who said in 1945: "No man expects to live forever. But the man in perfect physical condition will live longer, especially in combat." (Air Force Print News)